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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: JAM LEADER'S DEATH SPARKS VIOLENCE

CLASSIFIED BY: Louis L. Bono, Director, Basrah Regional Embassy Office, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

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¶11. (S) On Friday afternoon May 25 Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF), in coordination with MND-SE, attempted to arrest Basrah Ja'ish al-Mehdi (JAM) leader Wissam Al Wa'eli (aka Abu Qadir) as he was driving away from the Office of Martyr Sadr (OMS) headquarters. Wissam tried to escape, but was caught by the pursuing ISOF. He was killed, along with a bodyguard and a driver, during the ensuing firefight. His principal assistant Hayder Sabah escaped.

¶12. (S) The 23-year old Wissam was reportedly selected by Muqtadr al-Sadr to run the Basrah JAM wing after previous leader Sayid Naji was arrested by Coalition forces in December 2006. Reports indicate Wissam had close ties to Iranian intelligence agents; he was involved in weapons smuggling and organized attacks against the Coalition. Sources indicate he claimed to have recently received about \$800,000 from Iranian agents.

¶13. (S) Fallout from the operation was immediate. Al-Sadr denounced "the assassination" but appealed for calm to avoid giving the "occupiers" a pretext for further "aggression." Nevertheless, later that evening, JAM members attacked the Provincial Joint Command Center (PJCC) with mortars, rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire. It appeared that JAM was trying to overrun the PJCC, where approximately 80 British soldiers are garrisoned. The attack was repelled by the British soldiers with the help of an F-16 that strafed the attackers. Also that evening, multiple indirect fire attacks were launched against Coalition personnel at both the Basrah Palace Compound and Basrah Air Station. A Predator unmanned aerial vehicle, on loan to MND-SE, fired on a mobile rocket team and destroyed the team and their vehicle.

¶14. (U) As word spread that Iraqi Army (IA) forces killed Wissam, JAM members launched an attack on the home of the chief of staff of the 10th IA Division. A spokesman for the 10th Division quickly announced that the attack was conducted by ISOF outside the command of the 10th, and the attack subsided. Another IA officer was quoted as saying that Wissam "was known for instilling restraint in his men, and his absence could unleash violence on [Basrah]."

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